

As a purser on international flights out of San Francisco, I truly cannot conceive of having multiple cell phone conversations going on in an airplane cabin while the passengers are confined together for a period of 8 to 14 hours.

In any kind of emergency or medical event, the undoubted first reaction of many people would be to "call and tell someone". Flight attendants would have much greater difficulty in maintaining control of any situation and in gaining reliable assistance when necessary. We have been given many more adequate channels of communication, post Sept. 11 - and in the case of a true terrorist event, the cell phones obviously come out, even without official "permission".

On unexceptional flights, I can also see problems developing between customers who have differing priorities on passing their time. The current availability of Airfone service allows the business people who wish to pay for it to conduct a certain amount of transactions from their seats. However, the casual (especially teen-age) conversations that would be encouraged by cell phone use could easily escalate into something much more annoying than a crying baby or personal video game. We do not need one more reason for our customers to be taking offense at others' behavior. Please spare us all!

Thank you.